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Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 24500 041518Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 H-01 /071 W
----------095615 051030Z /20
R 041457Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5742
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 24500

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PERP, FR, SS, AG
SUBJECT: FRENCH READ-OUT ON WESTERN SAHARA PEACE PROCESS

REF: PARIS 24186

1. MFA SECRETARY GENERAL SOUTOU GAVE THE DCM A FAIRLY DOWNBEAT ACCOUNT OF HOW THE NEWLY ACTIVE FRENCH DIPLOMACY ON THE WESTERN SAHARA IS PROGRESSING (REFTEL). HE SAID THAT THE ALGERIANS HAVE NOT CHANGED THEIR POSITION AT ALL, AND STILL INSIST ON SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE WHOLE SAHARA. HE DISMISSED ALGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTEFLIKA'S WARM WORDS TOWARD FRANCE (DURING HIS VISIT HERE EARLIER THIS WEEK) AS DESIGNED SOLELY TO
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SHOW RABAT AND NOUAKCHOTT THAT ALGIERS IS ON GOOD TERMS WITH PARIS. AS FOR FRENCH-ALGERIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS, SOUTOU SAID THEY HAVE MADE NO PROGRESS.

2. SOUTOU WAS SOMEWHAT MORE OPTIMISTIC WITH REGARD TO RABAT. HE SAID IT IS HIS PERSONAL GUESS THAT MOROCCO MIGHT NOT BE AVERSE TO A SOLUTION (PRESUMABLY IN THE

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DIRECTION OF AUTONOMY) FOR THE MAURITANIAN-ADMINISTERED PART OF THE WESTERN SAHARA. HE BELIEVES THE BURDEN OF THE WAR WEIGHS HEAVILY ON MOROCCO AND THAT, IF RABAT
COULD CONSERVE ITS PART OF THE SAHARA, IT MIGHT BE WILLING TO COMPROMISE ON THE REST. SOUTOU CONCEDED THAT, FROM THE MOROCCAN POINT OF VIEW, ANY SOLUTION IS DANGEROUS.

3. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH SOUTOU DID NOT SAY SO, WE PRESUME HIS REMARKS ON MOROCCO REFLECT GISCARD'S MEETING THIS WEEK WITH HASSAN'S ROYAL COUNSELOR REDA GUEDIRA. HARTMAN

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